

Communication and Engagement Strategy

December 2024



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Introduction

The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership (IOWSCP) is a statutory body that leads on keeping children safe and ensuring their wellbeing on the Isle of Wight. The Partnership includes local agencies who work together to make sure that child protection services on the Isle of Wight are effective and keep our children safe.

This Communication & Engagement Strategy has been developed to ensure that the work of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership is effectively communicated to children and their families, safeguarding partners, and relevant agencies across the Island.

The IOWSCP will ensure that its communication is focused on safeguarding and this will be regularly reviewed with children and families, partners, and agencies to ensure that it is effective and meaningful.

The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership is supported by the partnership team who act as a central point of contact between the different organisations.

The IOWSCP has an Information Sharing Agreement that facilitates the lawful and secure sharing of information between organisations and designated professionals working to keep children safe across the Isle of Wight.

Strategy aims and objectives

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that everything we do is underpinned by two key principles:

- **Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility** – for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part
- **A child centred approach** – for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs, views and wishes of the individual children whilst recognising the support parents and carers and family as a whole may require.

The strategic aim of this Strategy is to ensure that children and families, safeguarding partners and relevant agencies will be aware of what 'safeguarding' means and have access to information that will support them to make informed decisions regarding safeguarding and the protection of children. This means that children and families, partners and agencies will understand and be able to identify abuse, exploitation and neglect and understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

The objectives of the Communication and Engagement Strategy are:

- To raise awareness among key stakeholders, professionals, and the wider community about the importance of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and to engage children and young people wherever possible
- To raise awareness about the key strategic and business priorities of the Partnership
- Support the delivery of the business priorities of the Partnership by developing targeted campaigns encompassing communications and engagement activities
- To improve practice in relation to safeguarding children by communicating the key lessons learned from national and local child safeguarding practice reviews, rapid reviews, local

learning events, audits, and research

- To ensure that the 'voice of the child' is heard and that their views are taken into consideration
- To ensure that the voices of children and young people inform the learning, service improvement and practice of all Board partners and agencies
- To positively present work to safeguard children and young people on the Island to maximise confidence in the agencies involved
- Ensure a coordinated, multi-agency approach to communications
- To promote the welfare of children and young people
- To prevent abuse and neglect
- To inform multi-agency policy, procedure and practice
- To establish links with other strategic partnerships to develop a shared understanding of the needs of children and families and encourage the sharing of good practice
- To seek opportunities to engage directly with children and young people
- The IOWSCP will aim to provide information that is in plain language, of a high quality and meets the needs of the public, the community and voluntary sector, service users, and staff working in partner agencies
- To underpin the Hampshire and Isle of Wight joint Communications and Development group
- To encourage the sharing of good practice

Key messages

The key messages to all the target areas are:

- Highlighting all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- How to spot the signs and understand vulnerability indicators of the different types of abuse
- That keeping children safe is a responsibility shared across the whole professional and public community
- What to do if you are worried about a child
- What the different roles and responsibilities to safeguarding are, and how they should be fulfilled
- An understanding of the role of the IOWSCP, our priority areas of business and how they can be accessed
- The implications of key changes in safeguarding legislation, guidance, and practice nationally and locally
- That information on safeguarding is easily accessible in a range of formats

Communication responsibilities

The IOWSCP has the following responsibilities:

- To be proactive in raising awareness of their role and work
- To promote the work of the IOWSCP with children and their families, practitioners, agencies, and the wider community
- To proactively engage with children and their families, practitioners, and the wider community to inform multi-agency policy and practice
- To engage with practitioners to promote an understanding of the work of the IOWSCP and to provide information about any changes to policy and procedure, identify best practice and communicate the findings of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- To support the development of all practitioners involved in safeguarding
- To support all partners to understand their contribution to promoting better safeguarding practice
- To keep partners up to date with developments in the organisation including changes to policies and procedure
- To share good practice, ideas, good news and learning from quality assurance work including reviews of cases
- To ensure that partners understand their responsibilities in respect of proactive communication and engagement
- To define and implement clear lines of communication and to ensure consistency and transparency wherever possible

Principles

This strategy reflects the following core communication principles:

- Openness and honesty
- Transparency
- Timeliness
- Accessibility,
- Avoiding acronyms and technical terms where possible, and providing an explanation if they are used
- Accuracy
- Support of Safeguarding agencies' priorities
- Compliance with the Data Protection Act

Standards

The IOWSCP will provide information that is accessible, of a high quality and meets the needs of the children and families and practitioners, agencies, and the wider community. The following standards apply:

- IOWSCP branding and colours will be used for all communications
- Information will be clear and in plain English
- Standard Calibri font size 11 is our standard typeface
- Information will be available on where to access information in different formats (e.g. large print – Arial font size 18, Braille, other languages, Easy Read, BSL, Audio or other electronic formats) and we will make every effort to make these available on request. If this is not been possible, we will inform reader(s) as to the reasons why and seek an agreeable alternative
- All communication methods shall be consistently applied and be mindful of equality and diversity. Further supported by the provision of toolkits, templates, advice, and guidance

Our audience

The IOWSCP need to communicate with a diverse community and a range of groups and organisations that care for, educate, provide services for, and protect children.

Target audience

The key audiences that will receive communications from the IOWSCP will be:

- Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies of the IOWSCP
- The local workforce working with children and families
- IOWSCP Trainers
- Community leaders such as locally elected members, Members of Parliament and the Police and Crime Commissioner; leaders of religious and faith communities; voluntary and community sector workers
- Parents and carers
- Children and young people

Methods of communication

We will use a variety of communication methods including:

- The IOWSCP Website
- Practitioner Guides
- Quarterly newsletters—main board and education subgroup
- Publishing of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and associated Learning briefings

- Facilitation of quality assurance exercises such as partnership auditing, scrutiny visits, and Section 11 audits
- Delivery of a learning and development program via Safeguarding Conferences, training events and partnership briefings/ forums
- Facilitation of development of Partnership Safeguarding Policies, strategies, procedures, and associated action plans. With all common multi-agency policies and procedures that inform single agency policy being completed across the HIPS area via the HIPS Procedures group and communicated via the HIPS Procedures website
- The IOWSCP's Yearly Report and Business Plan
- Chair, partner and partnership manager networking activity
- Press Releases and campaigns
- Launch events and conferences
- Multi-agency training
- Minutes of meetings
- Social Media i.e Twitter and partners accounts such as IWC and police Facebook pages
- Targeted dissemination of key updates via Board members and subgroup members
- Partner Agencies have their own respective websites which provide information about services, contact details and links to the joint IOWSCP website

Measuring Success

The success of this strategy will be monitored via:

- Analysis of website analytics
- Numbers in attendance at public/partner Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership workshops, conferences, and training events
- Response to feedback requests
- Training needs analysis feedback
- Feedback from children and families involved in the safeguarding process
- Inspection feedback from partners
- Auditing activity
- Progress against the business plan
- Programme evaluations

Dealing with media enquiries

This section sets out the IOWSCP approach to working with the media via its general work or as part its responsibilities to undertake Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs).

Working with the media in most situations should be planned and statements agreed with the Safeguarding Partners and Independent Chair and Scrutineer. For LCSPR's this will also involve communication with agencies directly involved in the review, the National Panel and where appropriate the family. This is to provide consistency including ensuring a coordinated multi-agency

approach as appropriate.

There may be occasions when the media directly contacts the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership. In this situation the Safeguarding Partners must be notified immediately on receipt of such an enquiry, along with Isle of Wight Council Communications Team. Depending on the issue it may also be appropriate to contact the relevant statutory partner communications teams too. No agency or member of the partnership team should make a comment during initial dialogue with the media, including an 'off the record statements'.

The IOWSCP is a statutory partnership in its own right set up under the Children Act 2004 and is not a public authority for the purposes of freedom of information. It is therefore exempt from the duty to provide information under the freedom of information.

Resources and budget implications

The IOWSCP are funded through the partner agencies. The annual budget includes ring-fenced sums for information and publicity.

Additional funding may be sought from partner agencies for specific projects not identified in the IOWSCP Business Plan.

The IOWSCP will endeavour to use the most cost-effective methods of communication wherever possible and utilise existing communication streams of partner agencies wherever possible.

Specific promotional activities / campaigns must receive approval from the IOWSCP Executive group after full consideration of budget implications.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews cannot be predicted, and can be initiated at any time, it is the responsibility of the Strategic Partnerships Manager to consult with the Safeguarding Partners to determine the specific communication strategy for each individual review. Support can be sought from any agency's Communication Team as appropriate.

Governance

This Strategy is agreed by the partners of the IOWSCP and implemented and monitored by the IOWSCP. This strategy will be reviewed every three years.

Approved By: IOWSCP Executive Group

Date: 17th December 2024

Next Review due: December 2027